

THE
URBAN DISTRICT OF
OF
CAKENGATES.



ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer for Health for 1904.



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Gentlemen,

I Beg to present my SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT upon the vital statistics, sanitary administration and condition of your District for the year ending December 31st last.

As regards the various matters dealt with I would remind you that inasmuch as a moiety of my salary is repaid by the County Council I am required by the Local Government Board to send a copy of this report to each of these authorities. In a memorandum issued by the Local Government Board, the subjects with which this report should deal are tabulated and it is stated that, as these reports are intended for their information as well as your's, matters which may seem too well known to you to be included, must not be left out if they serve to complete the information desired by them.

For this reason various matters which may appear to you to be merely a repetition of parts of former reports, or of subjects the immediate importance of which has gone by, are necessarily included.

The subjects specifically named in memorandum referred to cover a good deal of ground, and the Board have also enlarged the "tables" of statistics which they require appending to this report.

I have dealt with these subjects in much the same order (as far as they are applicable to the district) as they are given in the memorandum.

- (1) General Character of the District,
- (2) Vital Statistics,
- (3) Infectious Disease Incidence,
- (4) House Accommodation,
- (5) Drainage and Scavenage,
- (6) Water Supply,
- (7) Workshops, &c.,
- (8) Nuisances.

General Characters of the District.

The District, as now constituted, covers an area of some 2,327 acres, and includes several more densely populated localities with some open country with scattered dwellings. It was formed in 1898 out of the adjacent parts of three neighbouring rural districts owing to the difficulties in securing anything like efficient sanitary administration.

The ground surface varies considerably, the portion to the North and West being part of the Shropshire plain overlying the bunter beds and covered with drift, the elevation sloping from about 200 O.D. in the North to nearly 400 towards the South East where the coal measures rise up and gradients rapidly rise to nearly 600 O.D. It is the centre of an important coal and iron industry.

The district thus includes a large number of mines both exhausted and actively working, coal and iron stone being raised, and a number of ironworks and engineering shops. There are a few good houses and a large number of cottages, more or less irregularly distributed and of low rateable value.

From a sanitary point of view the outstanding features have been the lack of a pure and abundant supply of water and means of drainage.

Vital Statistics.

I have estimated the population at 11,000 which is the same estimate as in 1903 as I now regard the estimate as being somewhat too high.

The number of births recorded amounted to 373 or 41 fewer than in 1903. This gives a birthrate 33.9 as compared with 32.8 the average general birthrate since the formation of the district, and 27.9 the birthrate for England and Wales. Of the births 182 were boys and 191 girls. Apportioned in quarters of the year they occurred as follows:—1st quarter 100, 2nd quarter 103, 3rd quarter 89, 4th Quarter 81.

The way in which the returns were made do not enable me to give the rates in the different wards.

The deaths registered in the district numbered 173, in addition to which there were 11 residents who died in the workhouses (Wellington and Shifnal) the Asylum and Salop Infirmary. Thus the net deaths belonging to the district total 184, giving a general deathrate of 16.7 as against 16.5 the average for the district and 16.2 for England and Wales. The deathrates for the period during which the district has existed are as follows :—

| 1898 | 1899 | 1900 | 1901 | 1902 | 1903 | 1904 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 17.3 | 18.1 | 15.6 | 15.3 | 15.1 | 17.7 | 16.7 |

Though there has been a general tendancy towards a diminished mortality, there was a somewhat serious rise in 1903 with which I dealt in my last annual report, and the figure for the past year, though more favourable still less satisfactory than could be desired. 1904 had prolonged periods of warmth and dryness and such conditions favour the developement of infantile diarrhoea where sufficient cleanliness and attention are not given to the feeding of young children. This is well instanced in your district, for whereas there were only 6 such deaths recorded in the wet year 1903 there were 14 in 1904. Infectious disease also helped to raise the deathrate. As regards other important causes of death there was an increase in Phthisis or Consumption, from which 11 deaths were recorded—all at the most valuable time of life, the wage earning period, and most of them at the family maintaining period. Fortunately this disease is a preventable one, and in a great many parts of the country organised efforts are being made to deal with this lamentable scourge. The most hopeful means practicable appear to be the education of children in our primary schools in such subjects as the value of fresh air, cleanliness, temperance and domestic management together with the abatement of overcrowding, the repression of indiscriminate spitting on the floors of dwellings, public houses and railway carriages, &c., and the provision of some accommodation for suitable cases, where by means of a sanatorium early cases may be benefited and above all educated, and where by means of a hospital hopeless cases lodged in unsuitable dwellings may end their days in some comfort, and without being a source of danger to others. The whole subject is one which demands the attention of many others besides the district councils, e.g. :—county councils, board of guardians and the general public. Up to the present very little has been done in this county.

Cancer caused 12 deaths, ten of them between 25 and 65 years of age. The following figures show that for a district like this containing a large proportion of younger people this malady is somewhat prevalent.

| 1898 | 1899 | 1900 | 1901 | 1902 | 1903 | 1904 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 8 | 12 | 6 | 12 | 7 | 14 | 12 |

The lower line shows the number of deaths in each of the years.

I regret that it is still outside the scope of practical sanitation to "prevent" this disease.

Infantile mortality again attains considerable proportions. During the year there were no fewer than 57 deaths of infants (under 12 months of age) and 28 deaths of young children (1 to 5 years). The infantile death rate amounts to 142 which, with the exception of that for 1899 is the highest in the history of the urban district. For a district in which the women are not engaged in factories this is an extremely high rate. The following table shows the chief causes of this infantile mortality.

| Epidemic Disease. | Tubercular Disease. | Bronchitis Pneumonia. | Diarrhoea Wasting | Various | Premature birth. |
|-------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|---------|------------------|
| 4 | 3 | 10 | 20 | 14 | 6 |

We can only regard the deaths from epidemic disease, tubercular and diarrhoea and wasting diseases as being in the main preventable. No doubt some of the deaths in column 3 come strictly speaking within the same category. At any rate it is safe to say that at least 27 of these deaths were due to causes which are avoidable. The dense ignorance of the people in the elementary rules of healthy living and surroundings is responsible for the greater part of this condition, as it is also the greatest obstacle to the sanitarian in his work amongst them. I would commend to your notice the remarks I made on this subject on page 5 in last year's annual.

Infectious Disease.

There were a good many cases of notifiable infectious disease in 1904 some 91 persons in all being known to have had one or other of these maladies.

DIPHTHERIA provided the greatest number of cases 57 having come to our knowledge. Towards the end of the year I gave you a special report on this subject and as there were very few cases after that report was completed and as it is so recent I need not go over the ground again here. Whilst most of these cases were single or sporadic, in a few instances two or more in the same house suffered. In one house there were 5 patients, in another 4 and in one 3. There were 9 deaths of which 6 were young children, thus counting only the known cases the deathrate was 16%, but as a number of mild attacks almost certainly escaped recognition the type of disease cannot be regarded as having been generally severe, and an examination of the cases themselves confirms this conclusion. I referred in that report to the steps taken to control the spread of the disease and to certain features which I regarded as being associated with the developement of the disease. The average age of these patients was 12 years, which is somewhat higher than usual.

SCARLET FEVER or Scarletina attacked 17 persons in 13 houses, though there was reason for thinking that all the actual cases were not recognised as being Scarlet Fever and so escaped us. Nearly all the cases occurred in the last quarter of the year (when this disease is usually most prevalent). Most of the attacks were light, but in two instances, both young children, a fatal result followed. There was little or no connection between the various cases so far as inquiry was able to ascertain, and they present no special features calling for special comment. The premises were all visited and inquiries made and directions (verbal and printed) were given as well as disinfectants where necessary.

TYPHOID FEVER occurred on 6 occasions. So far as I know, none of these cases was submitted to the bacteriological test provided, though some of them were exceedingly slight attacks. Three of them in March were quite unassociated with each other, and though at one house there was a serious drainage defect there

was no obvious source of infection in the other two. The remaining three cases were all in September. The first one was certainly connected with a very insanitary condition, a privy leaking on to the road and the house drain blocked. It is very probable that one of the others was also infected while attending to the abating of this nuisance. In none of the cases was there any reason for suspecting water or milk as the vehicle of infection. The remarks which I made in my last annual report on the subject of Typhoid Fever apply to these cases as well as to the particular ones referred to there.

There were ten cases of ERYSIPELAS and one of PUERPERAL FEVER which do not require any special comment here.

I am glad once again to record an entire absence of Smallpox though there were cases in an adjoining district. The provision made for isolating these cases remains as before.

There was some amount of nonnotifiable disease during the year particularly Measles which is more or less constantly present and which is not very amenable to control in this district. There were also some cases of Whooping Cough.

I am glad to be able to record a more systematic visitation and disinfection in these outbreaks of infectious disease.

(4)

House Accommodation.

I have dealt with this subject in previous recent annual reports. There have been some new houses built during the year, but naturally the houses built by private speculator are not available for the poorer members of the community, though in some instances the pressure on the poorer cottages is relived when new houses are built.

By-laws regulating new buildings are in force. They have the misfortune of being in some respects somewhat unduly stringent.

There is a large number of houses in the district which call for more or less constant supervision, as they are approaching the limit of their existence. There are many without adequate troughing to carry away the rain water which in consequence leads to dampness of walls and site. There is also a lack of adequate paving around a good many of the houses.

Drainage and Scavenage

The year has been marked by the construction of the comprehensive drainage scheme which was improved by the board in the previous year. This will be a great improvement and a vast amount of the more obvious insanitary features of the district will be done away with. The next step will be the connecting up with the houses and I hope that much progress will be made during the year.

No doubt much trouble will be experienced before this essential work is completed, but by steady and systematic application the various, in some cases, indescribable conditions will be permanently remedied. Panclosets have increased in number during the year with consequent increased expenditure for scavenger, but until a water scheme is carried through this can scarcely be avoided. The system of scavenger remains as described in the last annual though more care is being taken to avoid the accumulation of the larger heaps that have been a familiar feature in the district

Water Supply.

The feature of the year was the presentation in parliament to the bill to provide a joint water board for Oakengates and some of the neighbouring areas which were in great need of water. From a sanitary point of view it was extremely desirable that this bill should have succeeded. Had it done so a large area and population at present in great need of water might at an early date have been put in possession of an ample and pure supply. I greatly regret to have record that the bill was so cut down in parliament as to very seriously impair its usefulness. It is especially unfortunate that the opposition was in large measure that of other sanitary authorities. It is however to be hoped that though the scheme was thus seriously crippled you will be able to proceed with the work of providing a water supply, the need for which no one is better acquainted with than yourselves.

Workshops, etc.

Owing to the change made in your staff during the year there has not been time yet to put the sanitary administration of these places on a proper footing, though a commencement has been made. The register though provided was not kept entered up, nor had any routine work been initiated.

I have visited the slaughter houses and reported on them in view of their being registered. They are on the whole fairly satisfactory though some of them were in need of improvement. The bake houses are for the most part satisfactory and in some cases very well constructed and managed.

Nuisances.

A considerable amount of work has been done in regard to the abatement of nuisances of which in a district like this there is always a plentiful supply. Whilst many of these arise from the want of drains and sewers, which will soon be no longer the case, a large proportion are due to defective troughing, paving and channeling and to insufficient closet and refuse accommodation. There was again some difficulty with the Knacker's yard, the owner of which has promised much but had done little.

General.

I have made the usual systematic and incidental inspection and visits. Though your Inspector has not had very long to acquaint himself with the district and though much of the sanitary administrative work was not at all fully developed he has taken up his work in a way which is worthy of a commendation. The separation of sanitary work from the road work enables more systematic and complete performance of the general sanitary work of the district.

I compliance with the requirements of the Local Government Board I append the tables of statistics which they desire.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

E. T. WHITAKER,

M. O. H.

Shrewsbury,
March, 1905.



THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE WORK DONE BY THE
SANITARY INSPECTOR DURING THE PERIOD HE HAS HELD OFFICE
(Six Months).

| | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-------|
| Number of houses inspected both systematically and incidentally | ... | ... | 409 |
| Number of notices served (formal and informal) | ... | ... | 117 |
| Approximate number of such complied with | ... | ... | 107 |
| Reports to Sanitary Committee | ... | ... | 12 |
| Houses disinfected after Infectious Disease | ... | ... | 81 |
| Deficient or objectionable water supply | ... | ... | 9 |
| New drains or amending of old drains | ... | ... | 19 |
| New closets or „ „ closets | ... | ... | 63 |
| „ ashpits or „ „ ones | ... | ... | 11 |
| Privies converted into pan closets | ... | ... | 15 |
| Houses damp or dirty or not weather proof etc. | ... | ... | 14 |
| Offensive accumulations off all kinds | ... | ... | 3 |
| Animals kept so as to be a nuisance | ... | ... | 8 |
| Houses overcrowded | ... | ... | 4 |
| Offensive Trades under observation | ... | ... | 1 |
| Slaughter houses registered or licensed | ... | ... | 7 |
| Dairies and cowsheds, Persons registered | ... | ... | 21 |
| Number of places registered in Workshop register | ... | ... | 60 |
| New houses built | ... | ... | 31 |
| Privies and ashpits emptied | ... | ... | 1760 |
| Loads of ashes removed | ... | ... | 4923 |
| „ „ nightsoil „ | ... | ... | 1497 |
| Pan-closets emptied once a week | ... | ... | 114 |
| „ „ twice „ | ... | ... | 28 |
| „ „ three times a week | ... | ... | 50 |
| Total number of pans emptied and disinfected | ... | ... | 16640 |
| Ashboxes emptied once a week | ... | ... | 78 |
| Total number of ashboxes emptied | ... | ... | 4056 |
| Applications made for scavenging | ... | ... | 1062 |
| Number of cases in which proceedings were taken in petty sessions | ... | ... | 1 |

(signed) E. REECE WESTBROOK,

Certified Sanitary Inspector.

TABLE 1.

Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1904 and previous years.

| Year. | Population estimated to Middle of each Year. | Births. | | TOTAL DEATHS REGISTERED IN DISTRICT. | | | Deaths of Residents registered in public Institutions beyond District. | NETT DEATHS AT ALL AGES BELONGING TO DISTRICT. | | |
|----------------------------------|---|---------|--------|---|---|--------------|---|---|--------|--------|
| | | | | UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE. | | AT ALL AGES. | | Number. | * Rate | |
| | | Number | * Rate | Number. | Rate per 1,000 Births registered | Number. | | | | * Rate |
| | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 1898 | 10,838 | 308 † | 27.4 | 40 † | 129 | | | 6 | 141 | 17.3 |
| 1899 | 10,861 | 341 | 31.3 | 62 | 181 | | | 2 | 197 | 18.1 |
| 1900 | 10,883 | 377 | 34.6 | 51 | 135 | | | 7 | 170 | 15.6 |
| 1901 | 10,906 | 341 | 31.2 | 37 | 108 | | | 8 | 167 | 15.3 |
| 1902 | 10,930 | 385 | 35.2 | 40 | 103 | | | 7 | 166 | 15.1 |
| 1903 | 11,000 | 414 | 37.3 | 55 | 132 | | | 8 | 195 | 17.7 |
| Averages for years 1898-1901. | | | 32.8 | | 131 | | | 11 | | 16.5 |
| 1904 | 11,000 | 373 | 33.9 | 57 | 142 | | | | 184 | 16.7 |

* Rates in columns, 4, 8, and 11 calculated per 1,000 of estimated population.

† 9 months only from formation of district.

TABLE 2.

| 1 Institutions within the District receiving sick and infirm persons from outside the District. | 2 Institutions outside the District receiving sick and infirm persons from the District. | 3 Other Institutions, the deaths in which have been distributed among the several localities in the District. |
|--|---|--|
| Cottage Hospital. | Workhouses—Wellington and Shifnal. Asylum. Salop Infirmary. | |

Is the Union Workhouse within the District? No.

TABLE 3.
Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the Year 1904.

| NOTIFIABLE DISEASE. | CASES NOTIFIED IN WHOLE DISTRICT. | | | | | | TOTAL CASES NOTIFIED IN EACH LOCALITY. | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|----------|----------|--|----|
| | At Ages—Years. | | | | | | | |
| | At all Ages. | Under 1. | 1 to 5. | 5 to 15 | 15 to 25 | 25 to 65 | | |
| Small Pox .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Cholera .. | 57 | 2 | 16 | 22 | 9 | 8 | .. | .. |
| Diphtheria .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Membranous Croup .. | .. | .. | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2 | .. |
| Erysipelas .. | 10 | 1 | 6 | 9 | .. | 1 | .. | .. |
| Scarlet Fever .. | 17 | 1 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Typhus Fever .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 | 3 | 1 | .. |
| Enteric Fever .. | 6 | .. | 1 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Relapsing Fever .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Continued Fever .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Puerperal Fever .. | 1 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1 | .. | .. |
| Plague .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |
| Totals .. | 91 | 4 | 24 | 32 | 12 | 16 | 3 | |

Isolation Hospital—Use of Wellington Rural for Smallpox.

TABLE 4.

Causes of, and Ages at Death during Year 1904.

| Causes of Death | Deaths in or belonging to whole District at subjoined Ages. | | | | | | | Total Deaths in Public Institutions in the District. |
|---|--|------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--|
| | All ages. | Under 1 | 1 and under 5 | 5 and under 15 | 15 and under 25 | 25 and under 65 | 65 and up- wards | |
| Measles | 5 | 2 | 3 | | | | | |
| Scarlet fever | 2 | | 2 | | | | | |
| Whooping-cough | 2 | | 2 | | | | | |
| Diphtheria and membranous croup | 9 | 1 | 5 | 2 | | 1 | | |
| Enteric fever | 2 | | 1 | | | 1 | | |
| Epidemic infl'nza | 2 | 1 | | | | 1 | | |
| Diarrhoea | 7 | 7 | | | | | | |
| Enteritis | 9 | 6 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | |
| Other septic diseases | 1 | | 1 | | | | | |
| Phthisis | 11 | | | | 5 | 6 | | |
| Other tubercular diseases | 7 | 3 | 3 | 1 | | | | |
| Cancer, malignant disease | 12 | | | | | 10 | 2 | |
| Bronchitis | 10 | 5 | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | |
| Pneumonia | 14 | 5 | 6 | 1 | | 1 | 1 | |
| Alcoholism | | | | | | | | |
| Cirrhosis of liver | 2 | | | | | 2 | | |
| Premature birth | 6 | 6 | | | | | | |
| Diseases and accidents of parturition | 3 | 1 | | | | 2 | | |
| Heart diseases | 16 | | | | | 6 | 10 | |
| Accidents | 7 | | | | 1 | 3 | 3 | |
| Suicides | 1 | | | | | 1 | | |
| Marasums | 7 | 7 | | | | | | |
| All other causes | 49 | 13 | 3 | 2 | | 9 | 22 | |
| All causes | 184 | 57 | 28 | 7 | 6 | 46 | 40 | |